

In illustration of this point he adduces an instance of journalistic practice which in certain cases merely re-echoes the opinion current for the time being and which makes no effort to elevate and guide public opinion from principle and conviction. Mr. MacNeill rightly holds that the minister should not follow in the wake but be a leader. Here he says good and true things about the manly independence that should prevail in the Christian pulpit. "If the pulpit is not independent it is nothing" is a statement surely to which all right-thinking people will say amen.

A conscientious and intelligent independence in the matter of pulpit utterance is one among several felt wants of the time—not merely in reference to political shortcomings, a painful theme on which a number of ministers spoke out boldly in their Thanksgiving sermons, but on many of the manifest social and other tendencies of the age. Political corruption is a great evil and ominous of greater evils still, but does it stand alone? Is dishonesty confined to political life? Is every business transaction conducted on both sides on the principles of unbending integrity? If not, why? Is not the spirit of a genuine and pure Christianity chilled by the cold and unlovely spirit of worldliness which makes its baleful presence felt even in our churches? The power of rebuke is as much needed in the modern pulpit as it was in the days of John Knox, of Augustine, or the Apostles. Vituperation and indiscriminate railing are not required, because more harm than good would be done by such means. The earnest and fearless minister who has a firm grasp of the truth himself will manage in the way best suited to him to enable others to see it also. To be a successful spiritual mentor a man must have a high moral standard as his personal goal. The temporizer is a man without influence for good, either in the pulpit or out of it.

Mr. MacNeill very properly and temperately pleads for a reasonable degree of freedom from the domination of a cast-iron orthodoxy. He holds that it is unreasonable to "expect the ministry to be true to all the dogmas and decisions of past ages." The great Protestant movement when it broke irrevocably with the past never contemplated the substitution of an unalterable creed for the dogmas of Rome to be binding in all ages. The noble and scholarly men of past generations proclaimed the truth as they found it, and it is for their successors to be equally sincere and earnest in their researches. No human authority has power to bind the conscience or fetter the intellect. Creeds and systems have to be determined on by their conformity to Scripture truth. Neither novelty nor antiquity are in themselves recommendations or disqualifications. Of the labours of the theologians of the past, Mr. MacNeill says:—

The system of doctrines which they discovered in the Word was elaborated with consummate skill and ability. So well did they do their work that that system is as solid and stable to-day as ever. Though some would jeer at what they call old and obsolete doctrines, and would have us believe that the age has made progress beyond them, and that those are fossils and fogies who still cling to them, yet it would be hard to find any theological system to compare with Calvinism as it really is. If it could be cleared of the world-wide misconceptions of it; if we could make it clearer and more explicit, I believe that grand old living truth of God's sovereign Fatherhood, whether we look at the Sovereignty through the Fatherhood or at the Fatherhood through the Sovereignty, would become a basis upon which all God's children of every Church could rest their faith.

HOME MISSIONS IN THE UNITED STATES.

FOR our guidance and encouragement in different departments of Church work it is profitable occasionally to take a look at what other Churches in other lands are doing. The Presbyterian Church in the United States occupies a prominent and influential position and is one of the great factors in the Christian life and work in the American Republic. A brief glance, therefore, at the Home Mission work may not be without interest. The conditions in Canada and in the United States as to the need of Home Mission work are not essentially dissimilar. In what are now thickly-populated regions in earlier days the settlements were sparse and it was with difficulty that the people were supplied with Gospel ordinances. Presbyterian pioneers were in advance of their day in recognition of the need of personal and voluntary effort in providing the means of grace for the spiritually destitute. For while even prominent ecclesiastics were debating whether it was right to send missionaries to the heathen, the Presbyterian fathers of New England were sending missionaries to their brethren who had settled in what were then remote parts of

the country, and to the Indian tribes that roamed at large.

The vigour and energy with which Home Missions were begun by the American Presbyterian Church have been conspicuous up to the present time. Effort has kept pace with the expanding resources of the Church, and with the steadily-increasing claims of an augmenting population. The first Presbyterian congregation was organized in Philadelphia in 1690, and the first Presbytery was formed about the beginning of the eighteenth century, and from the time of its formation onward there were constant applications for aid in establishing new congregations and for the carrying on of strictly Home Mission work. From the fact that there are several different denominations of Presbyterians in the United States it is evident that there is to some extent a waste of energy and of resources. The union of Presbyterianism there would be productive of most important results in the cultivation of the Home Mission field. To the credit of each component member of the great Presbyterian family in the United States be it said that all of them are energetically engaged in the work of bringing the blessings of the Gospel within the reach of all. The union of the Old and New School branches of the Northern Church in 1870 gave a great impetus to this most important part of Christian work, and it has been steadily maintained ever since.

A few facts gleaned from the latest report of the Home Mission Board of the Church may be interesting as an indication of the magnitude of the work in which they are engaged. Missionaries under its supervision and supported by its funds are labouring in forty-five out of fifty of the States and Territories of which the Union is composed. The number of such missionaries is 1,677; missionary teachers, 340; additions on profession of faith, 10,683; by certificate, 7,408; total membership, 113,420; total attendance on services, 156,262; number of baptisms, adult, 3,861; infant, 5,218; Sunday schools organized, 438; number of Sunday schools, 2,452; number of pupils, 178,169. Liberal aid was also given for the erection of churches and manse, for the removal of debt. Thirty-six churches passed from the category of aid-receiving mission charges to self-sustaining congregations and 139 new churches were organized. It will be conceded that in most respects this is a very satisfactory exhibit. The contributions given for the support of this work is no less interesting. The congregations of the Church contributed \$279,101.31; the Sabbath schools, \$35,640.58; Woman's Missionary Societies, \$283,103.60—the largest of all the contributions; legacies, \$87,990.11; individual gifts, \$45,714.13; interest on permanent and trust funds, \$12,814.93; permanent and trust funds, \$23,890. Taking in receipts for special objects connected with Home Mission work, the total raised by the Northern Church for Home Mission work last year was \$849,363.65.

Large as that total is it does not comprise all that was raised by the Presbyterians in the United States for the support of Home Missions. The Southern Church contributed \$56,143 for work in the field under its care. The United Presbyterian Church reports \$60,639; the Cumberland Presbyterian, \$9,277; the two branches of the Reformed Presbyterian Church between them, \$18,807; and the Associate Reformed Church, \$5,000. In addition to these contributions large sums were raised for work among the Freedmen, so that work carried on and the funds provided for its maintenance are both on an extensive scale.

It is worthy of note that though numerically the Presbyterian Church is not quite the largest in the United States, its contributions for Home Missions is considerably in advance of all the others. The total reported by the various denominations for Home Mission work is \$5,818,001. The efforts put forth by the various Churches for the purpose of bringing the influence of the Gospel home to the people cannot but tell powerfully for good on the individual and national life of the Republic. One thing in which our co-religionists in the United States are in advance of us is the possession of a powerful Woman's Board of Home Missions. It was organized soon after the re-union of 1870, and, as will be seen by a reference to the amount contributed by them, it heads the list of all the givings. We have a most efficient Woman's Foreign Missionary Society, but as yet no similar organization for the prosecution of Home Mission work. We have the beginning of a Young Men's Home Missionary Society, but as yet it is only in its infancy. It is hoped, however, that it will grow and do a noble work commensurate with its responsibilities.

Books and Magazines.

ANSON D. F. RANDOLPH & Co. will publish immediately a new edition, in two volumes, of "Historical Memorials of Westminster Abbey," by Dean Stanley—with thirteen full-page photogravure reproductions of Railton's etchings.

CANADA HEALTH JOURNAL. (Ottawa.)—This is a useful monthly magazine whose function is to review and record sanitary progress. It is edited by Dr. Edward Playter, and conveys reliable and useful information presented in clear and popular style.

QUEEN'S COLLEGE JOURNAL. (Kingston.)—Queen's young men, not content with a monthly issue, desire to keep things lively by publishing the *Journal* weekly during the session. It maintains its reputation for brightness and sparkle. The last week's number, in addition to its usual contents, gives Chancellor Fleming's able and thoughtful paper on "Parliamentary versus Party Government," and also the paper read by him before the Royal Society on "A Political Problem."

In accordance with a custom of several years' standing, Harper & Brothers, New York, offer to Sunday schools a Christmas carol, in quantities of from ten to 500 copies, as may be required. They furnish them free, and any Sunday school officer may secure them if he makes an early request and gives the name of his school and the number of copies required. The words of this new carol are by Mrs. Margaret E. Sangster, and the music by Richard Henry Warren, organist of St. Bartholomew's Church, New York City.

THE METHODIST MAGAZINE. (Toronto: William Briggs.)—The November number is more than ordinarily bright. The illustrated papers are: "The Mount Pilatus Railway," "Christopher Columbus," and "Bunhill Fields—God's Acre." Other papers of timely interest abound, such as "Scotland's Influence on Civilization," "The Machinery of the Heavens Running Down," "The Last of John Wesley's Journal," "Alleged Progress in Theology," etc. The announcement of the conductors for next year presage that it will be a better magazine than ever before.

A PICTURE to every third page or so of November *Book News* (Philadelphia) gives a foretaste of what may be expected for the coming holidays. Mr. Dole, in his letter from Boston, tells of a number of the Christmas books, and this is supplemented by the announcements of publishers in the advertising pages. The price-list of current books, which *Book News* always describes so well, covers over twenty pages. The author portrait of E. W. Howe will interest all readers of his "Story of a Country Town." The biographical sketch by Miss Garside is a well-written and extremely readable article.

FELLOWSHIP: THE FULNESS OF THE LIFE IN CHRIST. By the Rev. John Smith, M.A. (Edinburgh: Andrew Elliot; Toronto: The Willard Tract Depository.)—This neat little volume by the talented and efficient pastor of Broughton Place Church, Edinburgh, contains a masterly exposition of the doctrine of fellowship with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. It consists of seven short chapters in which the truth is clearly yet popularly set forth and illustrated. The witness of the apostles as contained in the epistles in the New Testament is carefully considered and forcefully presented. The work is admirable, being written in a fresh and interesting style, and breathing a pure and devout spirit. No one can give it a careful perusal without greatly profiting by it.

THE PRESBYTERIAN COLLEGE JOURNAL. (Montreal.)—The enterprising conductors of this academic monthly begin the eleventh volume with a most attractive number. They have been successful in enlisting the services of able contributors. The number opens with a sermon on "The Unsearchable Riches of Christ," by Rev. J. K. Smith, D.D., formerly of Galt. Principal Grant, the versatile, supplies a thoughtful paper on "Current Unbelief." Dr. R. F. Burns, who recently revisited the old land, discourses *suo more* on "Edinburgh and Her General Assemblies," and Rev. L. G. MacNeill, M.A., of Halifax, has a sensible paper on "Some Illegitimate Expectations of the Christian Ministry." Among the other good things in the number, not here enumerated, are Professor Scrimger's able lecture delivered at the opening of the college session, and Professor Campbell's wise and racy "Talks."

OUR SIXTY-SIX SACRED BOOKS. How they came to us and what they are. By Edwin W. Rice, D.D. (Philadelphia: The American Sunday School Union.)—This is a most valuable little book, neatly printed, and interestingly illustrated by fac-similes of title pages, portions of texts, etc., of the Sacred Scriptures. A great amount of material is compacted in small space, yet at the same time methodically and admirably arranged. It is what its author designed it to be "a popular hand-book for colleges, Sunday schools, normal classes and students, on the origin, authorship, preservation, character and divine authority of the Christian Scriptures." It is evident that the author is conversant with the claims and results of the Higher Criticism, but he does not hesitate to maintain the integrity of the Sacred Books, and to state his reasons for declining to accept some of the conclusions reached by our new school of critics. The little book can be commended with the utmost confidence and cordiality.

THE PRESBYTERIAN QUARTERLY. (Richmond, Virginia: Whittet & Shepperson.)—This able exponent of Presbyterian thought in the Southern Church gives evidence that it can easily hold its own. The number for the current quarter presents a variety of papers that will be read with interest. The first paper is a reproduction, by request, of Dr. Kyper's, of Amsterdam, masterly contribution to the quarterly of the Northern Church, on "Calvinism and Confessional Revision." This is followed by a paper on "The Universal Book," by Dr. J. B. Shearer; "Inspiration of the Scriptures," by John Pym Carter, D.D.; "God's Problem for the South," by A. L. Phillips; "The Study of the Bible in the Original Languages," by W. M. McPheeters, D.D.; and "Calvinism; and Calvinism and Infant Salvation," by W. L. Nourse, D.D. There is also an able vindication of the Christian Endeavour Movement, by James Lewis Howe, Ph.D. The numerous and judicious "Criticism and Reviews," to which department Professor F. R. Beattie, D.D., contributes, are by no means the least valuable features of this most valuable quarterly.